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Nohad A'li

Rima'a Da'as

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Exploring the Relationship between Gender and Acceptance of Authority at an Arab School in Israel

Nohad A'li¹ and Rima'a Da'as²

Abstract

The purpose of this paper to fill a gap in the literature on “leadership” in Arab schools, which are part of a patriarchal society, specifically on the issues of principal gender and acceptance of his or her authority. Previous studies have argued that attitudes toward the school principal's role are related to culture and social structure. However, those studies did not take into account the effects of employee gender on acceptance of a male or female principal's authority. Teachers (N = 240) from 10 Arab elementary schools in northern Israel participated in this study. The Analysis of Variance -ANOVA revealed differences between teachers' genders in the acceptance of their principals' authority. Men and women teachers' perceptions concerning acceptance of a man principal's authority were more positive than those of men teachers accepting authority from a women principal. When the principal was a man, men and women tended to accept his authority to a similar degree; when the principal was a woman, women tended to accept her authority more than men. We further improved and validated a specific measure of authority acceptance, by exploratory factor analysis- EFA and Confirmatory factor analysis- CFA. Implications and considerations related to gender differences are discussed.

Keywords: Gender and Authority, Patriarchy, Gendered Leadership, Arab Schools, Construct Validity

Introduction

The issues of Arab women acquiring higher education and the feminization of education have brought about a remarkable increase in the rate of Arab women in the teaching force and with it, slow entrance into management jobs in education (e.g.; Abu-Baker, 2006; Hertz-Lazarowitz & Shapira, 2005). The higher positions in education management are still a mostly male domain with only a small number of women reaching these high positions (Najmi- Yosef, 2012). The current research deals with the dilemmas in the relationship between gender and acceptance of authority, by examining the differences in teachers of both genders' attitudes toward accepting authority from principals of both genders in the Arab educational system in Israel.

Previous research has indicated the patriarchal nature of Arab society (A'li & Da'as, 2016), with all sources of power and authority belonging to men; in fact, men and the elderly are favored in this society, while women learn to respect and obey their fathers, brothers, grandfathers and uncles, and sometimes even their cousins (e.g., A'li & Da'as, 2016; Joseph, 1993). Therefore, the job of the school principal is still perceived as a strong masculine job (Arar & Shapira, 2011; Kofman, Abu- Baker, & Sa'ar, 2012). Moreover, in socialization processes, society educates for hierarchical job distribution. According to this approach, men, as the executive and rational gender,

¹ Western Galilee College and University of Haifa, Israel. NohadAli@univ.haifa.ac.il

² AL-Qasemi-Academic College of Education, Israel. rimaajd@gmail.com

are supposed to obtain executive positions, such as management jobs (Abu-Asbah, Abu-Nasra & Abu-Baker 2014). Socialization theory tends to divide the social structure into two spheres, public and private. The public sphere belongs to men and they control it with an iron fist, while the private sphere is for women (A'li & Gordoni, 2009; Abu-Hussain & Essawi, 2014; Abu-Hussain, 2015). Management jobs in general and school³ management, in particular, are part of the public sphere, in Arab Israeli society, and therefore, women who try to enter this sphere can expect many obstructions, both exposed and hidden.

There are two important issues underlying the research on female leadership in education: the first deals with the difficulties and obstructions in the path to the appointment of women to management positions. This issue has been discussed in the professional management literature in many western countries in the last 20 years, but it is only recently that research on female leadership has received attention (Kochan, Spencer, & Mathwees, 2000; Oplatka & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006; Shapira, Arar & Azaiza, 2011). The role of the principal is deemed suitable for men, despite the fact that Arab women teachers are as skilled as men teachers, if not more so. Even when a woman excels over a man in the performance of a management job, she still has a difficult struggle against male principals, who receive top priority (Arar & Shapira, 2011, p.80). This priority stems from the patriarchal nature of Arab society, resulting in men being preferred over women as school principals.

The second approach deals with gender difficulties after entering the job, such as the connection between the principal's gender and the teaching staff's acceptance of his/her authority. Although previous research has dealt with the difficulties faced by women principals, the link between gender and accepting authority has not been examined and is not completely understood (e.g., Nerdi, 2007; Shapira et al., 2011).

The current research focuses mainly on the second issue: the acceptance of a woman principal's authority by the teaching staff at schools, and examines differences in men and women teachers' attitudes toward men and women principals at schools in the Israeli education system. Researchers have argued for the necessity of expanding the research on Arab women as principals in Israel, which at present remains scant (e.g. A'li & Da'as, 2016; Arar & Abu-Rabia-Queder, 2011).

Like most schools, Israeli schools are relatively autonomous organizations in which formal leaders (principals) can influence organizational processes (Berson, Da'as, & Waldman 2015; Da'as, 2016; Eilam, 2002). These principals, in turn, are held accountable by the school community (including parents and municipality) for school performance. Thus, the position of the school principal is highly respected and powerful, with an influence on teachers and school processes (Berson et al., 2015; Da'as, 2014, 2007; Da'as & Qadach, 2016). Israeli elementary schools provide 6 years of compulsory free education. The government employs teachers, but principals have a strong say in who is hired (Da'as, 2007; 2014; 2016). Therefore, it is important to ask whether a principal's gender⁴ plays a role in the acceptance of his or her authority.

Furthermore, this research makes a statistical contribution. First, we developed a tool to measure attitudes toward accepting authority. Second, those attitudes toward principals were examined with respect to gender, by binary compositions: man principal–man teacher (m–m), man principal–woman teacher (m–w), women principal–man teacher (w–m) and woman principal–woman teacher (w–w).

³In this study we do not emphasize private schooling. However, such schools are also considered apart of Arab culture.

⁴Although gender is considered a spectrum, in this study, gender refers to men and women.

Gender Differences in Leadership Style

Over the last decade, research has consistently shown that school principals are powerful players who can affect school improvement and are key to schools' effectiveness in promoting high student achievement and success (e.g.; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Mulford, 2008).

Research on gender and leadership styles suggests differences between men and women in management styles (e.g.; Malakh-Peens, Dahan-Kelev & Ronen, 2002; Xu, Stewart & Haber-Curran, 2015). Women tend to be more relational and transformational in their leadership style than men (Eagly & Carli 2007; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003; Haber & Komives, 2009). Women have a greater focus on citizenship and approach leadership, with an eye on making a positive change in an organization or community (Dugan, Komives, & Segar, 2008; Haber, 2012). In cross-gender comparisons, Xu et al. (2015) found that latent means⁵ result in higher emotional healing, higher wisdom, higher persuasive mapping and higher organizational stewardship for women vs. men principals. There was no significant difference by gender for the construct of altruistic calling. A leader's belief in and facilitation of healing processes is termed emotional healing (Barbuto & Wheeler 2006). An altruistic calling reflects a leader's choice or desire to make a positive difference for others by putting their professional development ahead of his or her own self-interest (Bass, 2000). Wisdom reflects individuals' awareness of their surroundings, and their use of environmental cues to anticipate consequences and inform decisions (Barbuto & Wheeler 2002, 2006). A leader's ability to influence others—a cornerstone of leadership—is termed persuasive mapping (Yukl, 2006). Organizational stewardship refers to a leader taking responsibility for the well being of the organization so that it contributes to the community (Barbuto & Wheeler 2006).

Malakh-Peens et al. (2002) indicated women's tendency toward a democratic management style. In fact, democratic leadership is one of the cornerstones of the feminist approach. In interviews with Israeli principals, Arabs and Jews, many of them, both men and women, defined themselves as feminists. Feminism in their eyes is an attribute leading to equality and openness. Therefore, it turns out that a self-definition of feminist, even more so than gender, accounts for democratic management attitudes. In addition, it was found that men prefer a “command and control” type of leadership of which makes use of structural authority, focusing on personal interest, and control by giving rewards for certain assignments, while emphasizing the personal contribution. Women prefer an “interactive leadership style” which includes shared decision-making, use of personal authority, focusing on goal achievement, control by empowerment, and emphasizing cooperation with subordinates. Women in leadership positions usually prefer working in organizations that are structured as a network rather than as a pyramid. They tend to encourage participation, empower others' self-value and stimulate their subordinates to favor the organization's interests over their own (Malakh-Peens et al., 2002).

Another approach in explaining gender differences was suggested by Bem (1993). Bem has suggested the notion of “gender lenses”. The first lens refers to the centrality of the man, according to which the man is perceived as the objective and standard or normative measure, whereas the woman is perceived as different from the norm. The second lens is gendered

⁵Latent variable modeling involves variables that are not observed directly in research. Latent variables are involved in almost all kinds of regression models. In a broad sense, all additive error terms in regression models are latent variables simply because they are not measured in research.

polarization, namely, the tendency to see men and women as binary contrasts: strong/weak, rational/emotional, mission-focused/people-focused.

Opletka (2002, 2007) examined the experiences of women principals making use of power and authority. He suggested that women do not use power in the traditionally perceived manner (hierarchical, oppressive and domineering); rather, they tend to perceive power as a means of helping students under their authority develop, taking responsibility for them, developing social relationships, and giving and caring (Opletka, 2007). Opletka described the inner world of women principals, the obstacles they overcame on their way to the top, and their need for self-renewal, particularly at the mid-point of their careers. He indicated four styles of renewal selected by women principals during their management careers: they “resurrect”, “search for new ground”, “climb mountains” and “try to hold to the brink” (Opletka, 2002).

Other researchers have focused on explaining differences between the genders, such as in terms of organizational structure. Acker (1990) suggested that both sexuality and gender derive latently and deeply from most organizational processes, while the organization actually constitutes a male arena that discriminates against women. Accordingly, men set the game rules in the organization: what is expressed in the organization reflects manhood and masculine principals controlling authority structures. Acker (1990) stated that it seems unnatural for men to accept authority from a woman while at the same time controlling the authority structures.

Although the above research describes the relationships between leadership styles and gender differences, there is still the issue of acceptance of a principal’s authority by teachers of each gender.

The Relationship between Accepting Authority and Gender

The status of Arab women in Israel has improved of late, and their way to higher education is no longer blocked. Nevertheless, their status in society remains marginal, and many obstacles lie in their path toward suitable employment in general, and leadership positions in particular (A’li, & Da’as, 2016; A’li & Gordoni, 2009). “Women are seen as fit for ‘feminine’ roles such as teachers or teachers’ assistants, but not for management and leadership positions” (Arar & Abu- Rabi-Queder, 2011, p. 416).

Arab society⁶ still perceives school principal as a clear-cut man's job, despite the significant increase in the number of women principals (Abu- Baker, 2006; Arar, 2010; Arar & Shapira, 2011; Kofman et al., 2012). In 2011, among principals in Jewish society, 67% were women. On the other hand, the rate of women principals in Arab society was 15.33% (Balas, Givoli, Hiaman, & Ofarim, 2012). In 2012 (Dirasat, 2012), Arab women principals numbered 117 out of 689 total, namely 17% of the total number of principals. Shapira and Lazarovitz (2009) suggested that Arab women are exposed to triple oppression: national (as the national minority), class and gender. This is mainly due to the patriarchal society, in which women are perceived as inferior to men and dependent on them.

Research on the perceptions of Arab men and women teachers about management jobs and styles of Arab women principals found negative perceptions toward feminine management. Teachers preferred a man over a woman as principal. These teachers' negative perceptions seem to result from difficulty in taking orders from a woman, and the perception that women are not gifted with the same mental abilities as men (Waleed, 2012).

⁶It is important to note that Israeli society, and certainly conservative, orthodox and ultra-orthodox Judaism are patriarchal, but there are also challenges to the patriarchy.

Some studies have focused on women and men in Arab society who have made their way from teaching to management (e.g., Abu-Baker, 2006; Hertz-Lazarowitz & Shapira, 2005). They argue that the social climate encourages men and blocks women, no matter how skillful the latter. Women must show skills that are similar to those of men, and then perform better, to reach management and leadership positions.

Arar and Shapira (2011) discussed the following question: Why are so few women appointed as principals in Arab high schools in Israel compared with the situation in the Jewish high schools? Their research presented the gendered aspect of choosing a management job, and how it affects and actually changes the nature of the school. The two women who participated in the research, Nadera and Sameera, two principals in high schools in a traditional Arab society, chose a management job due to its hidden influential aspect on both the students and society as a whole. They perceived themselves as agents of change, and described the changes they made, and are still making, in the school. Another, study by Arar and Abu-Rabia-Queder (2011), of two women, pioneer principals within the Arab education system in Israel, indicated that women principals were required to function in a society that does not yet recognize women's leadership as part of the social norm. Women principals want to prove that, despite their gender and the associated expectations and coping with the norms of Arab patriarchal society, they are effective leaders. Furthermore, In-depth interviews elucidated the life stories of four women supervisors in the Arab education system in Israel, showed that Arab patriarchal society sets many difficult demands for women aspiring to their posts but at the same time they noted that with determination it was possible to achieve their aspirations (Arar, 2014, p. 427).

The literature above showed that women's path to leadership jobs is still problematic. Although the above studies focused on the difficulties of Arab management roles or the preference for men over women, there is still no reference to teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward accepting a men or women principal's formal authority. This authority derived from the contractual agreement between the individual and the organization, the contract specifies the employee's rights and duties (Smith, 2000). As Isherwood included, that formal authority is associated with the role one occupies in an organization and is sometimes referred to as hierarchical legal position (Isherwood, 1973, p.55). However, still the research of teacher's perceptions towards principal's authority lack of consideration. Based on the backdrop of the prior research just recounted, the current study examines the relationship between gender and acceptance of authority, while examining the differences in attitudes of men and women teachers toward men and women principals. We expect that:

- Hypothesis 1: women teachers will tend to accept a woman principal's authority more than men teachers.
- Hypothesis 2: men and women teachers will tend to accept a man principal's authority to the same degree.
- Hypothesis 3: men teachers will tend to accept a man principal's authority more than a woman principal's authority.

Method

The Context of the Study

The Israeli educational system encompasses all schools in Israel (Abu-Asbah, 2007). Jewish principals run Jewish schools and the teaching is in Hebrew. Arab principals run Arab

schools; the teaching language is Arabic, but the schools are part of the Israeli educational system in both administrative (which includes funding) and curricular aspects (Abu-Asbah, 2007; Arar, 2012).

While the Jewish educational system has benefited from a pioneering spirit that carried with it openness and even gender equality—from the secular Zionist spirit that dominated in its first years and from the feminist spirit that penetrated Israel in the 1980s, Arab education stumbles far behind. The Arab society, defined as traditional with a clear religious orientation and later, as a society in transition (A'li, 2014), refused to change its views of gender equality until the 1990s. Together, the clear traditional characteristic and the tendency toward religiousness significantly blocked women's promotions to key positions, particularly those in management.

Furthermore, until the 1990s, the number of Arab women academicians was very low and social legitimacy did not really allow them to run for high-level positions.

The Ministry of Education, which is very careful not to intervene blatantly in Arab cultural issues—being affected by stereotypes, preconceived ideas and also traditional Arab leadership, is extremely careful about creating initiatives that will bring about changes in women's status and as such, also causes some blockage in women's status. At the same time, the Ministry of Education encourages and even urges Jewish women to run for high positions, because of the high influence of a policy of openness among Jews, which is very late reaching the Arabic education system.

Procedure and Participants

Teachers (N = 240) from 10 Arab elementary schools in northern Israel participated in this study. Six of these schools are managed by a man principal and four by a woman principal. The schools were selected by distributing schools in the northern district into geographic clusters (Upper and Lower Galilee⁷). We chose five settlements from each geographic cluster. These were then divided according to settlement size (over 20,000 residents and under 20,000 residents). In each area, we chose two settlements above 20,000 residents and three settlements with less than 20,000 residents. We chose 10 elementary schools from the 10 settlements according to the index of the principal's gender. We randomly chose six schools managed by men principals and four schools managed by women principals. This distribution reflected the number of male Arab principals and female Arab principals in Israel (further, the number of women principals was not as large as the number of men principals in this district).

Among the teachers who participated in this study, 67.1% were women; 49.6% had 1–10 years of teaching experience, 27.1% had 11–20 years, 15.8% had 21–30 years, and the remaining 7.5% had been teaching for over 30 years. With respect to tenure at the studied schools, 45.4% of the teachers had been at their school for 1–10 years, 42.9% for 11–20 years, 8.3% for 31–40 years, and 3.3% had been at their school for over 30 years. Finally, 9.9% of the participating women were under 30 years of age, 50.9% were 30–39 years of age, 29.8% were 40–49 and 9.3% were above 50. On the other hand, 3.8% of the participating men were under 30 years of age, 43% were 30–39 years of age, 25.3% were 40–49 and 27.8% were above 50. From the participants' answers concerning the principal's gender in the school in which they teach, 31.2% were female principals

⁷These are regions in the northern district of Israel. Upper and Lower Galilee are considered geographical–political divisions that have been in use since the end of the Second Temple period. They originally referred to the Upper Galilee as a mountainous area straddling present-day northern Israel and southern Lebanon, its boundaries being the Litani River in the north, the Mediterranean Sea in the west, the Lower Galilee in the south (from which it is separated by the Beit HaKerem Valley), and the upper Jordan River and the Hula Valley in the east. The Lower Galilee is called "Lower" since it is less mountainous than the Upper Galilee. For more details see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lower_Galilee; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper_Galilee.

and 68.6% were male principals.

The research sample was divided into four different combinations: man principal–man teacher (m–m), man principal–woman teacher (m–w), woman principal–man teacher (w–m) and woman principal–woman teacher (w–w).

Table 1 presents the gender percentage by teachers and principals. The group of men teachers with women principals was smallest, reflecting the Arab education system, where the percentage of men teachers in elementary schools is lower than that of women teachers, 27.3% vs. 72.7%, respectively (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

Table 1: Distribution of Participants by Gender Percentage

		Teacher gender	
Principal gender	Man	Man	Woman
	Woman	26.2%	42.5%
		6.2%	25%

Measures

The measure of receptivity to authority was built specifically for this research, as we found no measurement capturing this issue in the literature. Therefore, we built this measure consistent with previous work emphasizing gender, women's style, women's status in schools, and difficulties faced by women in schools (e.g.; Arar, 2010; Nardi, 2007; Oplitka, 2002; 2007). The research tool passed the reliability and validation pre-test conducted by five experts. Following this pre-test, some of the items were changed in accordance with the experts' notes until the questionnaire reached its final version. Then, it was delivered to a group of 15 teachers from two Arab schools in the northern district to modify the questionnaire for the research population. This stage brought about a significant improvement in question formulation. This version had 10 items. Teachers rated their attitudes toward accepting principals' authority with respect to each item on a 4-point Likert scale (1=disagree to 4 =agree).

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) confirmed two factors (by Varimax rotation as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Factor Loading of 10 Items (N = 240)

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2
The teaching staff in our school perceive the man/woman principal as a role model	0.688	0.08
The teaching staff in our school perceive the man/woman principal as a very charismatic person	0.657	0.153
The teaching staff in our school see the man/woman principal as a mother/father figure	0.599	-0.095
*The teaching staff in our school often refer to the man/woman principal's superiors to lodge complaints	0.18	0.578
* The teaching staff in our school ignore the man/woman principal's instruction without discussing it	-0.023	0.567
* The teaching staff in our school avoid obeying the man/woman principal's instructions when they are perceived as unreasonable	0.375	0.095
The teaching staff in our school tend not to argue with the man/woman principal	-0.073	0.835

The teaching staff in our school do not argue with the man/woman principal in public	0.081	0.792
The teaching staff in our school accept the man/woman principal's authority even when it deviates from his/her authority as established in the statute	0.126	0.611
The teaching staff in our school is willing to accept a man/woman principal's authority on different issues, even in cases which are not directly connected to the work domain	0.087	0.41

*Absolute value above 0.4. Item 18 was dropped. * Revised item.*

The final version of the questionnaire depicted two subscales of authority acceptance. The first included three items related to accepting authority of the leader as a role model, and the second subscale depicted the acceptance of superior authority.

We then conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to verify the structure of the measure by Amos program (Arbuckle, 2006). All items loaded significantly in two dimensions, and fit reasonable indexes (CFI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.07; see Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hoyle, 1995), and all regression weights were significant. Alpha reliability coefficient for the first subscale was 0.75 and for the second, 0.73.

Results

Means and standard deviations of teachers' acceptance of authority by gender are presented in Table 3.

We conducted a one-way ANOVA by SPSS program- 22.0 to examine the differences between the four groups. ANOVA results showed that there are differences between the four groups ($F(3)=4.07$; $p< 0.01$); ($F(3)=4.64$; $p< 0.01$) with respect to the two subscales of accepting authority (role model and superior respectively) by gender. Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of the teachers accepting authority by gender.

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviation (SD) of Teachers' Acceptance of Principal Authority by Gender.

Group	Accepting principal authority as role model		Accepting superior authority	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
principal (m)–teacher (m)	2.64	0.71	2.71	0.44
principal (w)–teacher (m)	1.91	0.56	2.29	0.49
principal (m)–teacher (w)	2.60	0.75	2.65	0.47
principal (w)–teacher (w)	2.59	0.66	2.53	0.44

Regarding the first subscale, analysis of teachers' perceptions of accepting the authority of a principal who is considered a role model by post-hoc test (Tukey) showed differences between the groups, with the largest difference between the man principal–man teacher and woman principal–man teacher groups. The mean difference between these two groups was significant ($md = 0.73$; $p< 0.05$). Therefore, hypothesis 3 was confirmed. The mean difference between woman principal–man teacher and man principal–woman teacher groups was also significant ($md = -0.69$; $p< 0.05$). In addition, the mean difference between woman principal–woman teacher and woman

principal–man teacher groups was significant ($md = 0.68$; $p < 0.05$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

The mean difference between man principal–man teacher and man principal–woman teacher groups was non-significant ($md = 0.03$; $p = n.s.$). Thus when the principal is a man, men and women teachers will tend to accept his authority similarly, confirming hypothesis 2.

Regarding the second subscale—teachers' acceptance of authority from principals who are deemed to be superiors, analysis by post-hoc test (Tukey) showed that the main difference was between the man principal–man teacher and woman principal–man teacher groups (Table 3). Mean difference between these two groups was significant ($md = 0.42$; $p < 0.05$). Thus, hypothesis 3 was confirmed. The mean difference between woman principal–man teacher and man principal–woman teacher groups was also found to be significant ($md = -0.36$; $p < 0.05$).

As shown in Table 3, although women teachers tended to show better acceptance of woman principal's authority than men teachers, the mean difference between woman principal–woman teacher and woman principal–man teacher groups was also found to be not significant ($md = 0.24$; $p = 0.09$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 was not confirmed.

Finally, the mean difference between man principal–man teacher and man principal–woman teacher groups was non-significant ($md = 0.06$; $p = n.s.$). Thus when the principal is a man, men and women teachers will tend to accept his authority similarly. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was confirmed.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between a principal's gender and acceptance of his/her authority by the teaching staff according to their gender in elementary schools in the Arab sector in Israel. The results confirm our claim that teachers' acceptance of the principal's authority changes according to the latter's gender. The school is found to be an expansion of the public sphere, which favors men. Schools do not break the walls separating the educational space and the public space—women are still jailed behind these walls. Furthermore, our results reflect the cultural structure and patriarchal society characterizing Arab society, with men's authority passing to schools as well.

This study extends previous research emphasizing the difficulties faced by women as principals. Those latter studies did not examine the relationship between teachers and principals, or attitudes toward accepting authority. In addition, this study showed that despite the formal responsibility and authority bestowed by the Ministry of Education on school principals, gender has a significant impact on the acceptance of authority.

The main differences in acceptance of authority (superior and role model) were found between the group combinations: man principal–man teacher and woman principal–man teacher, and the group's woman principal–man teacher and man principal–woman teacher. Men and women teachers' perceptions concerning acceptance of the male principal's authority, were more positive than those of male teachers when the principal was a woman.

When the principal was a man, men and women tended to accept his authority to a similar degree; when the principal was a woman, women tended to accept her authority more than men. This finding is compatible with previous research stating that in the work place, in the domains of management and leadership, men and women alike will not contest the authority of a manager who is a man (Galy-Badenas, 2015; Sandberg, 2013; Stoker, Van der Velde, & Lammers, 2012). The mean of women teachers' acceptance of a woman principal's authority, when the principal is

regarded as a role model, was higher than that of men teachers' acceptance. However, in the subscale of accepting superior authority, the mean difference was not significant (although the mean of women tending to accept a woman principal's authority was higher than for men). We argue that this result stems from the small number of individuals in the man teacher–woman principal group.

Women teachers were characterized as accepting the woman principal's authority; we suggest that part of this is simply because she is of the same gender. On the other hand, other groups of women may have some reservations in accepting the woman principal's authority. The fact that these teachers are of the same gender obliges the woman principal to give them special treatment (Haneek, 2008).

In contrast, the woman principal–man teacher group showed a different tendency. Men teachers' attitudes toward a woman principal's authority were much less positive than in the other groups. This is compatible with previous qualitative research in which women in management jobs in a school claimed that the teaching staff under their authority constantly compared them, critically, with the man principal who was there before them in that job (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000).

Another explanation for these differences in acceptance of a woman principal's authority by men teachers lies in the fact that “the power of authority” for women is weaker than that for men, in the case in Arab communities and also within Israel. Men are considered to be “natural leaders”. A strong woman is not accepted and is even hated because she does not suit expectations (Shapira, Arar, & Azaiza, 2011; Shapira, & Hertz- Lazarovitz, 2009). Such a woman breaks the stereotype acquired by men and even rebels against the Glass Ceiling (Jost & Banji, 1994).

Specifically, these results expand prior research in the Israeli education system. Nerdi (2007) reported on discrimination against women in the management domain. She found that if a man and a woman voice the same idea, the man's “authoritative” and “bossy” voice gives it an advantage. Moor (2007), adopting feminist theory⁸, showed that when a man principal gives an order he is perceived as an authoritative and effective leader, whereas when a woman principal does the same, she is perceived as aggressive, threatening and offensive (Moor, 2007). Abu-Rabia-Queder (2008) suggested that Arab society questions the professional capacity of Arab women principals and even perceives of their management–leadership job as irrelevant and not integrated with her being a woman (Abu-Rabia-Queder, 2008). The notion of irrelevance stems from being a woman in a patriarchal society. Despite the changes and modernization processes seen by the Arab society in recent years, it seems that it still blocks women's promotions to management jobs, which are perceived as a man's domain. This situation has significance and even consequences on the woman principal's functioning and behavior. Sometimes this situation can threaten her professional decision-making inside the school. The fact that she is a woman, they will claim, is the reason behind this failure.

Examining the factors contributing to the difficulty in accepting the authority of a woman principal among a group of men teachers in an Arab school reveals the complexity of this phenomenon. Some of these factors originate in the patriarchal structure of the Arab culture; others in a resistance to feminism; some are related to machismo⁹, some to organizational structures; some depend on socialization, and some stem from the woman principal herself and her management style.

⁸Gender-equality branch.

⁹Machismo depends on equality of socialization.

This research offers two basic contributions: social value and organizational–managerial. First, it contributes to understanding the relationship between a principal's gender and management jobs in elementary schools in Arab society. The present research showed that women principals are perceived as having less authority than men in similar management jobs, while emphasizing issues related to feminine management after the entrance of women into management positions in a society in which male dominance continues to prevail.

Second, unlike other studies, the present research makes a methodological contribution by examining the issue of principals' authority at the organizational level through binary tests of the attitudes between four principal–teacher groups with different gender compositions.

The results of the current research are vital for decision-makers in the Ministry of Education, the professional echelon, the supervisors and the principals. It is important to initiate workshops for different groups from the educational system to influence their attitudes toward women principals. Exposing these groups will assist the professional echelon in coping with conflicts stemming from lack of acceptance of authority based on gender background. Such workshops might take advantage of teachers' professional development, which is considered mandatory for all teachers every year; teachers' courses that focus on attitudes toward women, in general, might be promoted to develop their acceptance based on skill, rather than on gender or cultural perceptions.

We also think that managers need to focus on increasing teachers' commitment to the vision of the school and the realization of its objectives. Promoting commitment to the school will increase acceptance of the authority of women principals. In particular, teachers should work together as one unit with the principals to achieve these objectives.

It is also important to have gender representation, both women and men, in management positions in educational institutions. We suggest that the Deputy Director in the Arab schools be a man, specifically in those schools with a woman principal. Gender representation can refine the situations or resistance and help in acceptance of the principal's authority.

This study has several limitations. First, we collected data only from elementary schools in Israel. Future research should be expanded to other types of organizations and cultural contexts, such as business organizations, whose structures and rules are different. Another limitation of this study is the small number of men teachers managed by women principals. Although this reflects the reality of Arab schools, a larger group would have taught us more about the acceptance of women principals' authority by the teaching staff.

Further, research should be expanded to other districts, especially the peripheral areas in the south of Israel, among the Bedouin society which is characterized as clan–patriarchal and perceived as more traditional than the Arab society in the north (Eyal, Da'as, & Berkovich, 2016). In this society, the number of men who are teachers and principals (95% principals in 2011, Balas et al., 2011) is still relatively larger than in the other areas of the country.

Further research should examine transformational leadership styles, gender and authority acceptance. Previous research has indicated that women who use a masculine management style are perceived as less effective by their subordinates (Eagly, Kuru, & Makhijani, 1995). On the other hand, a transformational leadership style was found as effective, efficient (e.g.; Bass & Avolio, 1997) and enhancing school outcomes (Berson et al., 2015). Accordingly, it would be important to examine the influence of feminine-style transformational leadership on accepting her authority.

In summary, this research shows that there is a connection between a principal's gender and acceptance of his/her authority by teachers. The question is: if there were more women

principals in the Arab educational institutes in Israel, would Arab society and its educational system be influenced for the better?

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